RAJYA SABHA

Thursday, the 24th March, 2005/3 Chaitra, 1926 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,

MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Blue Print of Tsunami Warning System

*321. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR:††

SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:

Will the Minister of OCEAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Canadian scientist accompanying the Canadian Prime Minister during his recent New Delhi visit, made presentation of a blue print for setting up a Tsunami Warning Centre in the Indian Ocean;

(b) if so, the broad features and estimated cost of the Tsunami Warning Centre and whether the system is proposed to be set up in a joint venture between the Ocean States;

(c) whether the scientist had made such an offer before Tsunami disaster also; and

(d) if so, Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) Yes, Sir. Dr. Tad Murthy, a Canadian expert, made a presentation on various aspects of Tsunami generation, propogation, preparedness and mitigation in general, during the Brain Storming Session entitled 'Great Tsunami Event of 26 December 2004' held on 21-22 January 2005 in New Delhi.

(b) The Government is setting up a Tsunami and Storm Surges Warning System at an estimated cost of Rs. 125 crores with the following components:

* Strengthening of the existing seismological network to indicate in near real time occurrence of a tsunamigenic earthquake.

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††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Sukhbuns Kaur.

* Installation of tsunami warning sensors close to the ocean bottom at appropriate locales in the Indian Ocean, with real time connectivity.
* Tide gauge and data buoys networking.
* Modelling of the inundation scenarios for the entire coast.
* The establishment of a center for collection of the information, analysis and generating status advisories.

No, Sir. The system is not proposed to be set up as a joint venture between India and other Indian Ocean States;

(c) No Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Sir, December 26th tragedy left behind a trail of death and destruction killing thousands of people and leaving thousands homeless. Foremost among the issues thrown up by this tragedy was the need for Tsunami warning system and a good coastal management programme. The hon. Minister has stated that the Government is setting up a Tsunami and storm surges warning system at an estimated cost of Rs. 125 crores. Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is a possibility of bringing Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia as also certain African countries along the rim of the Indian Ocean which are as vulnerable, into the loop on cost and information sharing basis; and whether senior representatives of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank met Government officials and whether setting up of Tsunami warning system was discussed; and is there a possibility of financial data?

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, as far as collaborating with our neighbours is concerned which the hon. Member has asked, I just want to inform the hon. Member that this has been discussed at various international conferences and we have taken the position and rightly so, that the Tsunami system is going to be set up with us. But that does not mean that we are not going to collaborate with our neighbours. So, what we are going to do is that we will set up the system and then collaborate network with all our neighbours so that the information that we have is transmitted in real time to them so that it helps both sides. As far as discussions with the World Bank and other organisations are concerned,

no, there has been no discussion in the context of sharing or in the context of aid because we don't need aid. This will cost us Rs. 125 crores and it is well within our reach an we can do it ourselves.

SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Sir, we seem to be putting all our disaster mitigation eggs in the "Reactive Basket" of Rescue, Recovery, Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, Repair, Renewal and Retrofitting. None of the 1000 plus cities along India's 6000 km coastal stretch has even one line of either cyclone or sea erosion protection, despite all being incorporated in the operative bye-laws and development control rules. Despite Coastal Zoning Regulation no audit or enforcement has taken place. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any steps have taken place for good coastal management, which I think, would have three components-regulation, education and social mobilization.

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: As far as coastal management is concerned, Sir, this is not really within the purview of the Ministry of Science and Technology There is of course, a Central legislation to this effect and we hope that the State Governments which have coastal areas will effectively and strictly enforce the coastal regulations. The hon. Member is right that as we see on the ground today, the coastal regulations are not put into effect as quickly as it is required. So, I hope the State Government will take note of this and enforce them very strictly.

श्री कलराज मिश्र: सभापति जी, मैं आपके माध्यम से माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि डा॰ टैड मूर्ति ने दिल्ली में "26 दिसम्बर 2004 को आई भारी आपदा सुनामी" विषय पर गहन विचार विमर्श करने के बाद अपनी वार्ता के अंतर्गत यह भी कहा था कि भारत के अंदर ऐसी प्रतिभाएं हैं, जो सुनामी को रोकने में सक्षम हैं। इस संबंध में मैं यह जानकारी चाहूंगा कि क्या हमने ऐसी प्रतिभाओं के बारे में कोई तलाश की है? साथ-ही-साथ डा॰ एम॰एस॰ स्वामीनाथन कमेटी ने सुनामी से संबंधित, कुछ सुरक्षात्मक कार्रवाई की दृष्टि से, रिकमेंडेशन किए हैं, तो वे रिकमेंडेशन क्या हैं और क्या भारत सरकार ने उनके अनुरूप कार्रवाई करने का कोई कदम उठाया है?

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Sir, there are two parts to this question. The first part relates to what Tad Murthy has said and the second part relates to what recommendations Dr. Swaminathan has made. As far as Dr.Swaminathan's recommendations are concerned, Sir, they are in the context of the fact that along the coasts, nature provides us with protection; and when nature provides us with protection, this is in the form of mangroves, this is in the form of coral reefs, this is in the form of sand

embankments. Now, when man destroys those protections, then, we cannot be protected from nature. So, what Dr. Swaminathan has said that 'yes; we must ensure that human beings don't destroy those mangroves'. And, now, this is up to the civil society, this is up to the State Governments, this is up to all the States who are along the coasts to ensure that the mangroves are not destroyed. As far as we are concerned, those that have been destroyed, the Central Government and my Ministry are working along with Dr. Swaminathan to, in fact, regenerate the mangroves to ensure that those are protected.

As far ad Tad Murthy is concerned, Sir, I might say that we have, in India, the expertise available to set up the Tsunami system ourselves. We have both the scientific talent as well as the resources, and the I dare say that what we have, other countries, including the Pacific countries, don't have. In a recent Conference held in Paris where the Secretary of the Ministry was the leader, the Pacific countries realised that what we are talking about is a system which is far superior to the system, at the moment, prevalent in the Pacific countries. So, we have the capability and we are setting it up.

श्री कलराज मिश्र: तो उसके लिए क्या कोई कॉन्सेन्ट्रेट करने की कोशिश की गई है, लोगों को लाने के लिए?

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Sir, we already have a project in place; we have the costing in place; we know the steps that we are going to take; we have experts in place; everything is moving along as we had envisaged.

SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Sir, I have seen the reply given by the hon. Minister. There is no joint venture regarding the Tsunami disaster system. However, I would like to know from the Minister whether it is a fact that a bilateral cooperation between India and Canada is going to be envisaged in the fields of science and technology, environment, trade and industry.

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Sir, that has nothing to do with this question.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, India before the Tsunami struck on 26th of December did not share the information with some of the countries which have been the members of the Tsunami warning sharing system namely, Australia, the United States of America, etc. In this area, almost all the countries are members of that system. Japan has an expertise in

this regard. Apart from Tsunami-warning system, they give training to the people to protect themselves from the Tsunami disasters. Deaths are much less in Japan. When a Tsunami takes place, the people are evacuated within no minute. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Indian Government is going to join the Consortium. This is first part of my question.

Sir, the second part of my question is, whether the Government is going to utilise the expertise of Japan for the purpose of protecting the people who are living in the coastal areas which are affected by it by giving training to the people of the various States, who are in the fields for the purpose of helping them.

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Sir, I would like to respond to hon. Member by saying that these are two separate issues altogether. Sir, as far as the Pacific countries are concerned, you might note that there is a continuing fault in the Pacific Ocean and along all the countries of the Pacific Ocean. And, eighty per cent of all seismic energy is released in the Pacific Ocean. That has nothing to do with the Indian Ocean. Even if we were to join the consortium of the Pacific Ocean, it will not give us any information about the Tsunami in the Indian Ocean. What we are talking about is a system for a Tsunami warning in the Indian Ocean with respect to coastal areas within the Indian Ocean. Now, that has the Eastern Coast of India, Sir Lanka, Sumatra, Java, Myanmar, Africa, right up to South Africa. So, we have to set up a system of our own. The expertise and the information available in the Pacific warning system have no impact on us. Therefore, the question of our joining them doesn't arise. As far as the other expertise in Japan is concerned, I might just mention to my learned friend, the hon. Member, that sixty per cent of all warnings issued under the Japanese Tsunami Warning System have been false alarms. So, we want to set up an expertise far better than the Japanese system, which we are going to do.

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Sir, through you, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that the School of Oceanographic Studies, Jadhavpur University, West Bengal, have commented long back, even in the mid-1990s, in different newspapers, that the modelling of long wavelength basement undulation and geoid anomalies indicate buckling of the entire lithosphere in response to the North-South compression. They have also warned that evidences like intra-plate seismicity, earthquake

strain, energy release pattern, marine geophysical seismic profiling and fault plane solution results, indicate that the intraplate region of the Bay of Bengal is subjected to a North-Sourth compassive deformation. If so, is the hon. Minister aware of this and is the Ministry contemplating to set up an institute to find out, particularly...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, put your question. Mr. Manoj Bhattacharya, please put your question.

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Sir, that is my question. Is the hon. Minister contemplating setting up these sorts of institutes in the Jadhavpur University for further studies? Are they going to be augmented? From the research paper I find, and it is evident, that they had such an idea and they had given some warning.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's right. That's right.

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: I would like to know whether the Ministry is contemplating to strengthen the research activities in the Jadhavpur University, the School of Oceanography.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is enough. Please, take your seat.

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Sir, there are two aspects to this question. Here, we are discussing the tsunami warning system. The question does not relate to the tectonic activity that is taking place ...(*Interruption*)... between the Indian tectonic plate and the Burmese tectonic plate. My learned friend, the hon. Member, is talking about the friction that is being caused between these two plates. Not just the Jadhavpur University, but also the NGRI and several of our institutions. have gone in depth into the matter as far as tectonic activity is concerned. We measure the intensity of, what is called, the movement magnitude. This is exactly what we do and we have great expertise in it. But, if otherwise, my learned friend, the hon. Member, wants the resources of the Jadhavpur University to be augmented, there is no problem in discussing that issue.

DR. KARAN SINGH: Sir, this may sound strange, but there was a report in the papers recently that there could be tsunamis in the Himalayas, because with global warming, huge lakes can be formed. There was a report in the papers that if those lakes burst, there could be havoc in North India. I am aware that the hon. Minister is in-charge of the Department of Oceanography. But this is a question, either himself, or refer it to the

concerned Ministry, because the possibility of a tsunami in the Himalayas, although it may sound very strange, is also now within the reach of global warming.

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Sir, I thank the hon. Member for raising this issue. I can assure the hon. Member, not that I know of it, but I shall certainly sit with my officers and find out the authenticity of it, the feasibility of it and what we can do about it.

Creation of Special Economic Regions

*322. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:†
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Planning Commission has proposed the creation of Special Economic Regions in the country;

(b) if so, whether Planning Commission has sent a note to Ministry of Commerce to consider creation of five or six very large Special Economic Regions instead of the SEZs;

(c) whether proposed Economic Regions would be set up with world-class infrastructure and would not be meant for experts only;

(d) whether Government have considered the suggestions made by the Planning Commission; and

(e) if so, by what time a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) No, Sir. Planning Commission has not proposed the creation of Special Economic Regions (SER). SER is a concept suggested by a team of NRI professionals who made a presentation on "India FDI project", in December 2004.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the house by Shrimati Ambika Soni.